

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 03376 010219Z

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER

1. IN RESPONSE TO REQUEST I MADE LAST WEEK TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER FOR A ROUTINE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. I WAS GIVEN AN APPOINTMENT TO CALL ON HIM AFTERNOON APRIL 29. THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMED VERY RELAXED, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE IN TONE ABOUT HIS APRIL 28 SPEECH.

2. I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT IT HAD BEEN SOME TIME SINCE I HAD SEEN HIM AND I WANTED TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET HIS OWN EVALUATION OF THE CALENDER AND PROGRAM HE HAD ANNOUNCED IN HIS SPEECH AND POSSIBLE REACTIONS THERETO.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER INDICATED THAT HE CONSIDERED THAT THE REFORM PROGRAM WHICH HE HAD ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY WAS PROCEEDING ALONG ITS NORMAL COURSE AND THAT IN SPITE OF THE CRITICS, IT HAD BEEN ADMITTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DONE QUITE A LOT IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME IN NOT ONLY REPRESENTING DRAFT LAWS TO THE CORTES, BUT ALSO WITH RESPECT TO OPENING UP POLITITCAL ACTICITIES. THE REFERENDUM MIGHT PERFECTLY WELL HAVE BEEN HELD THE LATTER PART OF JULY, BUT HE FELT THAT THIS WAS NOT A GOOD MONTH TO GET A GOOD TURN OUT OF VOTERS. MOREOVER, HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 03376 010219Z

THERE WERE DISADVANTAGES IN TRYING TO GO TO FAR TOO

FAST. HE BELIEVED THAT BY THE END OF JULY, THE CORTES WOULD HAVE ACTED ON AND APPROVED BOTH THE SUCCESSION LAW AND THE LAW TRANSFORMING THE CORTES INTO A BICAMERAL BODY, THE CORTES AND THE KING COULD THEN MOVE TO ANNOUNCE A DATE FOR A REFERENDUM IN OCTOBER. THE PRIME MINISTER DISCARDED ANY POSSIBILITY OF A SEPTEMBER DATE. WHEN I ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE CORTES BLOCKED EITHER THE LAWS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR REFERENDUM OR OTHER REFORM LAWS ON WHICH CORTES ACTION ALONE IS NECESSARY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE DID NOT THINK THE SO-CALLED "BUNKER" HAD THAT SORT OF INFLUENCE AND, IN ANY EVENT, THE URGENCY PROCEDURES PROMULGATED BY CORTES PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ MIRANDA SHOULD OVERCOME ANY OBSTACLES.

RM THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE THOUGH THAT SOME TIME IN NOVEMBER, IT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR THE CONGRESS AND THE SENATE WOULD BE ANNOUNCED FOR EITHER JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, HE THOUGH THAT AS THE LAW ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS OR PARTIES MIGHT NOT HAVE FINAL APPROVAL FROM THE CORTES BEFORE MAY JUNE, THERE THEN WOULD BE TIME FOR THE PARTIES TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES ON A NATIONAL SCALE FOR BOTH THE REFERENDUM AND THE GENERAL ELECTIONS.

5. I ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER WHETHER THERE MIGHT NOT BE SOME MERIT IN HAVING AT LEAST THE REPRESENTATIVES OF MUNICIPALITIES IN THE NEW SENATE WHICH WOULD BE CORPORATE IN STRUCTURE, ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IN ORDER TO GIVE THAT BODY BRIADER REPRESENTATION, HE SAID THIS WAS NOT CONTEMPLATED, IT WAS INTENDED THAT VARIOUS GROUPS TO BE IN THE SENATE WOULD EITHER BE ELCETED INDIRECTLY OR WOULD BE BY NOMINATION. THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT IT PLANNED THAT EACH HOUSE HAVE ABOUT 325 MEMBERS.

6. REFERRING TO POLITICAL PARTIESN THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD PERMITTED ALL SORTS OF ACTIVITIES BY DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS EVEN THOUGH THE SITUATION HAD NOT YET BEEN REGULARIZED. EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHICH SUPPORTED VIOLENCE AND TOTITARIAN ISM, AND SPECIFICALLY THE COMMUNISTS, THERE WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 03376 010219Z

NO PROBLEM ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES PROVIDED THAT THEY ADHERED TO THE SPIRIT AND LETTER OF THE LAW YET TO BE ADOPTEDM WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER SPOKE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, HE MADE THE INTERESTEDING REMARK THAT THEY COULD NOT BE PERMITTED ANY ROLE "AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING". WHEN I RPOBED THE PRIME MINISTER AS TO WHETHER HE THOUGH THERE COULD BE A DIALOGUE WITH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION AFTER THE LAW

ON POLITICALS PARTIES HAS BEEN APPROVED, HE INDICATED THAT THIS WAS ALREADY GOING ON THROUGH VARIOUS MINISTERS, BUT HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE PERSONALLY FOUND LITTLE ATTRACTION IN THE IDEA.

7. I MENTIONED TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HIS SPEECH HAD DEVOTED LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE SYNDICATES. TO THIS, HE REPLIED THAT THE CONGRESS OF THE SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION WOULD TAKE PLACE IN JULY AND HE BELIEVED IT WAS BETTER TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO SEE WHAT THAT ORGANIZATION DESIRED. IN ALL LIKEIHOOD, THERE WOULD BE SEPARATION OF MANAGEMENT AND LABOR. UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS, PLURALISM OF LABOR ACTIVITIES WOULD BE PERMITTED, BUT WITHIN A CERTAIN UNIFIED STRUCTURE.

8. I UNDERSTAND THIS TO MEAN THAT THERE WOULD BE, FOR EXAMPLE, ONE METAL WORKERS UNION, BUT THAT VARIOUS POLITICAL TENDENCIES ALWAYS NIMUS THE COMMUNISTS, WOULD BE PERMITTED TO VIE THROUGH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS FOR LEADERSHIP.

9. IN CONCLUSION, I TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I THOUGH IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL FOR HIM TO SET A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR CARRYING OUT DEMOCRATIC REFORM. ALTHOUGH I REALIZED THAT THERE WOULD BE CONTINUING CONTROVERSY ABOUT WHETHER IT WAS TOO SLOW OR TOO FAST. WHAT SEEMED IMPORTANT TO ME WAS THAT HAVING SET THIS TIMETABLE, A STEADY RYTHM BE MAINTAINED. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE AGREED AND THAT WAS THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

10. AS WE ENDED OUR CONVERSATION, THE PRIME MINISTER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MADRID 03376 010219Z

EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE ELCTIONS RESULTS IN PORTUGAL SINCE THEY HAD NOT PRODICED THE CLARIFY WHICH HAD BEEN HOPED FOR. IT WAS HIS VIEWS THAT WE WULD STILL SEE PROBLESM DEVELOPING IN THAT COUNTRY.
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